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C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 000138

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [EC](#)  
SUBJECT: GOE RESPONSE TO DNI MCCONNELL'S TESTIMONY

Classified By: DCM Jefferson Brown for reason 1.4 (D)

¶1. (C) The GOE took issue with Director of National Intelligence McConnell's testimony of February 7 in a diplomatic note dated February 8. The Foreign Minister told the Ambassador that President Correa was personally upset when he read press accounts citing the testimony and report, and had instructed the ministry to send the following note.

¶2. (C) Begin Text:

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Integration presents its compliments to the honorable Embassy of the United States of America, and refers to the Report presented to the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee by the U.S. Director of National Intelligence, J. Michael McConnell, on February 7, 2008.

The Report says that the Government of Ecuador, inspired by Cuba and Venezuela, is pursuing an agenda aimed at undercutting checks and balances on presidential power, lengthening the term of office of the Chief of State, and weakening media and civil liberties, as well as "emphasizing economic nationalism at the expense of market-based economic approaches." The report also indicates that the Ecuadorian Government employs "anti-U.S. rhetoric" and that it has aligned with other countries on international issues against American initiatives.

The Government of Ecuador has received the Report with deep annoyance and rejects the referenced assertions, whose vagueness and lack of perspective reveal a distorted image of Ecuador and its democratically elected Government. The Government of Ecuador deeply regrets that such distortions come from an important agency of the Executive branch of the United States and believes that they show imprecision and prejudice against Ecuador and its Government.

As the Embassy of the United States (in Quito) knows well, the current political process that Ecuador is experiencing originated in the overwhelming citizen response to the popular referendum on April 15, 2007, in which 81.72% of Ecuadorians decided to call the National Constituent Assembly. The elections for the Assembly were carried out on September 30, 2007, with very high voter participation and transparent and clear results, endorsed by independent national and foreign observers.

The Report in question strangely neglects to mention this subject, nor does it refer to, as a result of the political process under way, the strengthened, more genuine democracy that has been seen in Ecuador. The National Government,

since January 2007, has oriented the Ecuadorian State and its institutions toward the search for and protection of the collective interest, and has fought determinedly to eliminate from the public sphere the illegitimate influence of lobbies, vested interests, and dishonest politicians.

Additionally, it is surprising that the Report censures the Government of Ecuador's approach favoring a healthy economic nationalism, and at the same time praises neo-liberal market policies. First, it is important to remember that the United States of America and all other industrialized countries, in various moments of their history, applied radical policies of economic nationalism and protectionism, which suited their interests, whereas countries that implement similar policies today are censured, which suggests the use of a double standard. Secondly, and most importantly, the Government of Ecuador is deeply annoyed that the Report questions the country's freedom to exercise its sovereignty and the right of self-determination, central pillars of international law, to choose the economic model that best harmonizes with the interests of the Ecuadorian society.

On the other hand, Ecuador has received with great annoyance the Report's statement that the policies of the Ecuadorian Government are "inspired and supported" by other states. We consider this statement a serious affront to the dignity of the country. Ecuador is an independent and sovereign country that maintains diplomatic relationships with dozens of nations, and prides itself on maintaining with all of them a dynamic of friendship and mutual respect. Ecuador has never supported or inspired unfriendly or violent acts against other States; it has never in its history intervened in the internal affairs of other countries, and has never affected the freedom of other peoples. In the same manner, Ecuador does not and will not accept other countries' intervention in its internal and sovereign affairs, nor allow them to impose policies that only Ecuadorians should define.

Finally, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs must express its total disagreement with the suggestion that Ecuador uses "anti-United States rhetoric" in its international actions. On repeated occasions, the President and senior government officials of Ecuador have voiced positive opinions in regard to the present and future of relations with the United States; of course, this does not prevent the two countries from having differences on specific issues, bearing in mind their sovereign interests. The Government of Ecuador has had the impression that relations with the United States have developed within the framework of mutual respect, in accordance with the traditional friendship between the two countries and within the framework of international law. Ecuador will continue to express its point of view on relations with the United States with respect and courtesy, and expects the same line of conduct from the United States and all parts of the U.S. Administration.

From the Report in question, we conclude that in certain parts of the U.S. Government there is clear ignorance of the nature of the processes of profound democratic change that are currently taking place in Ecuador and in Latin America, a lack of knowledge that the Government of Ecuador regrets deeply.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Embassy of the United States the assurances of its highest and most distinguished consideration.

Quito, February 8, 2008  
JEWELL